

GREENSBORO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

TRAFFIC ZONE *news mag*

**PLAN YOUR TRIP SOON
WITH GOOGLE TRANSIT**

PARKING GOBBLERS?

WINTER 2008-2009

**SIGNS...
SEALED...
DELIVERED!**

**GTA'S ALL A-TWITTER
WITH SOCIAL MEDIA**

THE LATEST PROJECT NEWS FROM NCDOT

**A MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR
ADAM FISCHER**

VOLUME 33 WINTER 2008-2009

In This Issue



| | |
|---|---------|
| A Message from the Acting Director..... | Page 3 |
| Cover Story..... | Page 4 |
| Getting Social with GTA | Page 6 |
| Business and Operations | Page 8 |
| Technology Update | Page 8 |
| Parking News | Page 9 |
| Engineering | Page 11 |
| Planning | Page 12 |
| NCDOT Project News..... | Page 13 |
| Upcoming Sidewalk Projects..... | Page 13 |
| Public Transportation | Page 14 |
| United We Ride | Page 14 |
| New GTA Services | Page 15 |



TRAFFIC ZONE

EMPLOYEE NEWSMAGAZINE

The Traffic Zone employee news-magazine is the department's printed resource source for employee information and communication. The document is published twice a year and is made available on the department website at www.greensboro-nc.gov/gdot. For comments or suggestions, please send emails to:

gdotquality@greensboro-nc.gov

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Greensboro **Department of Transportation** ***Mission Statement***

We are committed to improving safety and mobility and providing quality services to our community by:

Being Customer-focused
and Team Oriented

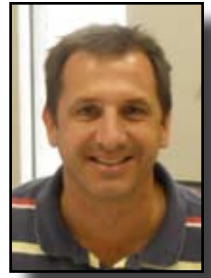
•
Being Cost-effective
and Innovative

•
Developing, Empowering
and Recognizing our Employees

A Message From the Director

Adam Fischer, Acting GDOT Director

New Year...New Challenges!



Our community begins 2009 facing some of the most troubling economic circumstances in our lifetime. Despite the tough economic issues facing Greensboro, there is still a strong demand for the services that we provide to the citizens of Greensboro and for the continued development of our transportation infrastructure. This is evident by the number of:

- citizens using our transit systems*
- people who bring us vehicular/pedestrian traffic safety concerns*
- commuters who bring us traffic congestion concerns*
- travelers who bring us parking issues*
- residents who request street lighting, and*
- developers that we continue to work with on various new projects.*

The citizens of Greensboro have also shown their support for future transportation improvements through their strong endorsement of the 2008 transportation bond package for \$134 million.

Greensboro has an excellent transportation system that has been established with forward thinking leaders and citizens who see the value of investing in the region's transportation infrastructure. A strong transportation system will be vital to future growth in Greensboro. I feel confident that Greensboro will pull out of this economic downturn sooner than other communities due in part to careful planning and wise investments in our transportation systems, which have placed Greensboro in an excellent position to compete for economic opportunities on a global scale.

As City staff, we will face one of the most challenging budget situations that most of us have ever seen. We must continue to look at the critical services that we provide and make certain that we are providing these services in the most cost effective manner. A wise old engineering professor once told our class that an Engineer is someone who can build something for \$1 that

any fool could build for \$5. Well, it doesn't necessarily take an Engineer to do for \$1 what anyone can do for \$5, but it does take someone with a lot of experience, common sense, ingenuity, and know-how...all qualities of which we have an ample supply in GDOT. The City Manager's Office and I will soon begin discussions with ALL GDOT staff about cost saving measures and ways that we can all work together through these challenges. You all know the nitty gritty details about the services that we provide and we are looking for you to provide us with suggestions on cost-saving measures.

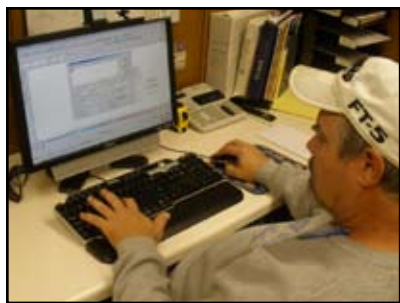
As we move forward, we must remain positive and upbeat to those that we serve and with each other. Our services will continue to be in high demand and we will continue to provide these services with the highest level of quality. There are many citizens in our community who are struggling right now and we need to show compassion for those in need and let them know that we are here to help them with all of our available resources. We must also continue to be business friendly and look for ways to help existing businesses and to encourage new development. Finally, we must continue the positive Can-do/Git-r-done GDOT attitude that has seen us through many challenges in the past. The City is blessed to have such an outstanding group of employees in GDOT working for them and I know that we will overcome this current economic challenge together as a team!

Adam Fischer, PE

SIGNS...SEALED... DELIVERED!

They are all around us...traffic signs of different sizes and colors. It's such an important part of the transportation system that could be too easily taken for granted. But as you recognize the various uses, it becomes all too clear what life would be without them. Marking the exit for Grandma's house...warning of a sharp curve ahead...indication of a school zone. Official signage approved by the US DOT is in heavy use in Greensboro, created by our very own GDOT Sign Shop. **Chuck Green**, **Vince Price**, and the boys at Patton Avenue are charged with creating easy to read, hard to destroy pieces for just about every need. The bulk of their work is for the City of Greensboro, but they also create signs for other municipalities. But what exactly goes into making and installing a roadway sign? In this edition of the Traffic Zone, we take you behind the scenes for a look at the making of roadway signage.

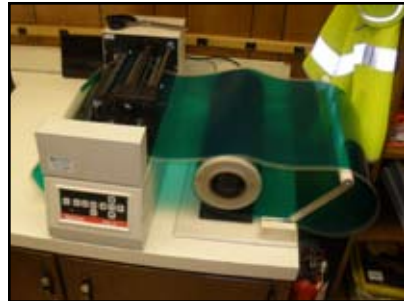
Each custom-made sign starts off with the click of a mouse. Using the Gerber Computer Software System, the sign maker can create a design from hundreds of custom templates entered into the system earlier,



or start entirely from scratch. For our example today, Chuck Green is creating a parking zone sign. The art is created using symbols and fonts (text) accepted by the DOT for roadway

use.

Once the sign is completed to the technician's liking, it is sent to the custom plotter for printing. Not on paper, but a transparent film called Electro Cut, or EC film made by 3M. This material, which comes in a rainbow of colors, is specially designed to allow the reflectivity of the upcoming sign backing to shine through, making the sign much more reflective at night. The artwork



is not printed on the film in a traditional sense, but is actually scored with a blade to divide the permanent art pieces from the removable backing.

From the plotter, the film is carried to the trimming table for the first piece of manual manipulation. Called "weeding", the extra film is carefully peeled away using an X-acto blade, taking care not to pull off the intended art. Each piece of EC film contains a self-adhesive backing that is not revealed until the piece is placed on the transfer table roller. There, the protective backing is pulled free leaving the adhesive ready to be mounted.



At this point, the sign would not be a sign without the durable metal backing. The signs used by the COG Sign Shop consists of substrate aluminum which



makes the signs lighter than in the past, but still able to withstand wind, rain and the occasional errant driver for a period of 7 to 10 years. The Sign Shop orders their metal as pre-cut

blanks, all .80 inch gauge in thickness. They are held in storage until needed. Although it may seem like there is a lot of extra blanks available, the lead time on getting additional metal can take up to 6 months for delivery, so proper inventory management and storage is a must.

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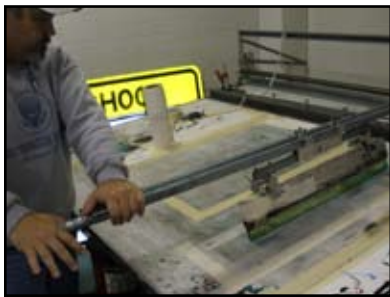
Signs continued from page 4

The blanks arrive in the requested sizes although they sometimes must be custom cut for specific projects. A metal shearing machine does the job nicely, applying 120 psi of pressure to easily slice through the .80 gauge metal. The sign blanks also come without the commonly seen rounded corners, so still another machine can cut the four corners to the proper radius with a press of the foot switch. Finally, the signs are held in place by heavy-duty screws threaded through the face. A hole puncher is used to make the preparatory holes.



However, as shiny as the metal blanks are, before the metal can be joined by the artwork, it must be prepared so that it will present optimum reflectivity at night. The metal is faced with a material called high-intensity prismatic from 3M also. Also available in a multitude of colors, this material is much brighter under the glare of headlights than previously used materials, which makes a useful beacon in the darkness. After the reflective backing is added to the metal and trimmed, the EC film artwork is laid down on it using a pressure roller. Run back and forth under the roller, the piece is eyed to assure it is on straight and free of air bubbles. After a final look at the piece, it is placed either in a ready rack for the installation crews or in storage for future use.

This process of sign making is used most often by the Sign Shop where it allows signage to be produced quickly and accurately. But screen printing is the other process used where large quantities of a single sign are needed.



If you have ever seen shirts screen printed, the signs are no different. The sign backing with the prismatic material is once again used, but there is no self-adhesive artwork this time...ink is applied directly to the material using physical templates. Frames hold the templates designed for the various types of signage needed. After the paint is applied to the template, a blotter is used to sweep across the template so that the ink only comes in contact with the sign where the template is empty. Once the sign is completed, it must be stored up to three days for the ink to dry.

The sign shop stays busy throughout the week generating new signage such as their current project to upfit all the street signs in the newly annexed Cardinal area. Other time is spent replacing current signs worn by the elements, or more commonly, damaged or destroyed by drivers. Keeping a large inventory of signs in stock allows them to react quickly to needs from the field. While producing standard signs is second nature to the shop crew, they are always ready to tackle unique projects such as the sign toppers for Greensboro's historic neighborhoods and most recently, the creation of a 9-foot bus wind-up key for the Jaycees Annual Holiday parade.



Of course, the signs would not serve their purpose if they are not installed. **Milton Moore** and his crew spends their days installing, repairing and replacing signs throughout Greensboro. Ranging from corner stop signs to Interstate directional signs, they are on call to get the work done. Installing a sign simply involves putting the sign post, called the channel, into the ground. Securing the channel into dirt, rocks, or asphalt...not so simple. Thank goodness for the use of a hydraulic driver. The tool attached to the back of every work truck literally pounds the channel through a multitude of terrain, even breaking through asphalt. For a 7 foot channel, the pole must go into the ground a distance of 2 feet, leaving 5 feet exposed. Installation is always done 2 feet from the curb to keep the signage in the City right-of-way while allowing space for mirrors and other objects



Continued on page 7

Marketing has always relied on utilizing effective forms of communication to deliver intended messages. The traditional forms such as press releases and print advertisements continue to be successful ways to reach intended targets, but savvy marketers must always seek innovative opportunities to communicate with various audiences.

Greensboro Transit Authority has joined a growing number of transit systems, municipalities, non- and for-profit organizations, even political campaigns in adding social media to our communications mix. Social media, also known as Web 2.0, is defined by Wikipedia as “primarily Internet- and mobile-based

GETTING

social

tools for sharing and discussing information among human beings...activities that integrate technology, telecommunications and social interaction, and the construction of words, pictures, videos and audio.” You may be less familiar with the term than the popular examples of social media: blogs, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Twitter, Flickr, Second Life and more. The use of social media by the general public has

GTA Connects Through Web 2.0

greatly outpaced the growth or even decline of some traditional media like newspaper. While the “party lines” of old allowed chatty teens to meet and share in a pre-arranged group setting, tying up phone lines, social media now allows greater access in a spontaneous setting, with supporting pictures

and video, in most cases free of charge. While personal use of social media was the initial driving force behind its rapid growth, the business world has quickly learned of its possibilities. Organizations both large and small have identified social media as a useful, cost-effective promotional tool locally as well as nationally. They have used it to their advantage through publicly available sites like MySpace or have created their own social meeting and information sharing sites such as WFMY-TV’s DigTriad.com. President Barack Obama’s recent election campaign is widely believed to have achieved much of its success due to its aggressive use of Web 2.0.



Don’t want to be on the web medium? Odds are that your organization is already on a social media site such as a blog or YouTube...many times presented in a not-so-wonderful way. The proliferation of multi-media cell phones and other portable devices make the capturing and uploading of audio and video effortless. So it only makes sense that if for no other reason, you can establish an official in the developing social world to present an accurate view of your business or cause instead of leaving the responsibility to others.

GTA first stuck its toes in the water with a YouTube site located at www.youtube.com/gtaheat. YouTube is a video sharing site established in 2005, and as of October 2008, is seen by 100 million viewers a month. Visitors on the GTA/HEAT page will find videos produced by GTA and the City of Greensboro, sharing relevant information on using GTA services and even experiencing GTA’s activities in the community. Video messages that once were limited to local distribution on City Channel 13 are now available on desktop computers, laptops, and portable web devices anywhere in the world.

Continued on page 7

Social continued from page 6

GTA has also established a home on Twitter, a micro-blogging site allowing followers to send and read others' updates by cell phone or email. Located at www.twitter.com/gtaheat, our page was established with the goal of delivering GTA service information, weather delays, rider tips and other information to riders. During weather events, GTA continues to use local television media alert systems which greatly restricts customized information. Now, GTA can send alerts of up to 140 characters at anytime to our service subscribers. Anyone with a text-messaging capable cell phone can subscribe simply by texting **followgtaheat** to the number **40404**. After following the simple directions, you will become a "follower" of GTAHEAT, able to receive and reply to text messages from GTA. Other transit systems using Twitter to communicate with riders include San Francisco's BART, San Diego's MTA, and Washington DC's Metro. The City of Greensboro has also joined Twitter, where you can find them at www.twitter.com/greensborocity



Most recently, we began utilizing the services of Flickr, a web-based photo-sharing site. Containing over 3 billion images, Flickr allows users to post their photos for access and views by an entire Internet community. We felt this would become a great way of sharing the numerous images we have acquired over the years of our buses, facilities and events instead of keeping them hidden on our computer servers.

We hope that as we continue to integrate social media into our communications efforts and evaluate its effectiveness, riders will find the endeavor useful for their continued enjoyment of GTA.

Signs continued from page 5

extending from passing vehicles. Once the target area has been determined to be free of underground utilities, the hydraulic driver is mounted on top of the channel. The whole unit is raised up to vertical, the switch is thrown and the driver goes to work with up to 1500 hits per minute at 2000 psi. In a matter of seconds, the post is in the ground, with a couple of level checks to ensure the channel is straight. If there is incorrect placement, the hydraulic lift located on the front of the truck extracts the channel as easy as it went in. (Note: To view the driver in action, visit the GTA YouTube site to see a demo of a bus stop sign installation at www.youtube.com/gtaheat)



This method is used for most single signs installed on level ground such as bus stop and adopt-a-street signs. But for the heavier street name signs on 2" square galvanized steel poles, more reinforcement is needed to keep them upright. In this case, a portable gas-powered auger is brought on site and a hole is drilled to the same depth of 2 feet. After the channel is centered inside the hole, it is surrounded by a fresh batch of concrete and allowed to set. To the completed bottom channel, the upper channel with the sign attached is bolted and tightened. The finished product will allow a sign height of 7 feet from the ground.

Of course, there are signs around town that don't touch the ground at all, rather, they are suspended from traffic signal lines or other specialty locations. Special hardware and a bucket truck are used for their installation. Each sign project, whether street level or suspended, ends with the closing of the work order in DataStream and scheduling of GIS to capture the location for GDOT's database of signage and GPS locations.

Thus, closes the process of creating your friendly neighborhood traffic sign. Although technology has allowed drivers to plan their trips from home using the Internet or navigate the streets with portable GPS systems, they can never replace the usefulness of the standard traffic sign, available night and day for the use of the wayward traveler seeking direction and guidance. Thank you, Sign Shop, for your role in always helping us find our way home.

Technology Section

The Technology Section has been busy over the past six months. We've been collecting field data, reviewing and streamlining departmental business processes, creating new systems using Infor EAM, and have partnered with MIS to maintain technical awareness within GDOT. Also, the Technology Section has captured over 1900 pieces of sign data, and has trained interns to obtain new sidewalk information.

We are excited to report that MIS and the Parking Operations Section is embarking on exploring a process to see if EAM can replace the Meter Manager Software. The Meter Manager Software is now being used to collect various readings from the parking meters located in the Central Business District. From this exploration, we will attempt to integrate EAM into all of Parking Operations work processes and build several Crystal Reports, thus bringing a windfall of savings to the Parking Operations Section. Furthermore, we are working on a new downtown parking study for the City of Greensboro so stay tuned for more information to follow.

Also, we are working closely with the Signs & Markings Section to create the markings layer hierarchy. This is a way to identify the reporting structure of GDOT marking assets. Once this is completed, we will have identified and tagged over 18,000 arrows, stop bars, crosswalks, school and railroad legends and other various markings in the City of Greensboro. Look for it in the near future.

In addition to the Signals and Signs & Markings Sections, we just added several new CF-19 Toughbooks. The Toughbooks will enable users to send and receive work orders while working in the field. Also, in the near future, we will be upgrading the Signal Section users' Toughbooks so they can accommodate the new Signal System Software.

Lastly, the Technology Section is aggressively incorporating new hardware and software so we can deliver information to our customers more accurately and quickly. The new software package is ARCPad and ARCPad Extension. This software platform will enable us to cut down on the before, during and after times of collecting GPS information. As an example, instead of spending the customary one hour to post process much of our GPS information, we are now spending approximately 30 minutes to post process GPS information. The new hardware to go along with ARCPad is our new GEOExplorer 2005 Series (GPS Unit) along with the upgraded Contour Laser Range Finder. Also, I look forward to explaining the process of creating a work order with multiple assets on the one work order.

Also, you may have noticed that with each of your Infor EAM Helpdesk calls you will receive a Helpdesk Survey, as part of our TIER II program. Please take a moment to fill out the survey so that we may evaluate our level of service to you. It's very important to us - keep filling out those surveys!

Administrative Section

The Electronic In Out Board (EIOBoard)

The GDOT front desk reception area was eliminated on December 1, 2008. This is a new concept and for the first time ever, GDOT no longer has a front desk person to greet visitors. By partnering with Planning and H&CD, we will utilize their staff person and their reception area to meet with our visitors.

Also, we became part of Planning and H&CD's Electronic In/Out Board (EIOBoard) system on November 1st. The EIOBoard appears to be very beneficial and will prove to be invaluable if staff will take the time to maintain a current and accurate calendar. The EIOBoard Kiosk is located in the Planning and H&CD reception area and will be monitored primarily by Linda Kirkman. This is an excellent office communication tool that provides quick status information for our visitors and callers.

We are excited about these two new innovative ways of providing customer service excellence.

Parking Section

Granite Missing?

In case you're driving by and see a few slabs of granite missing, we are having the granite evaluated at the Bellemeade St. Parking Deck. Some of the granite was showing signs of wear and tear due to some age and deterioration of the joints between the granite slabs. Sutton-Kennerly and Associates along with a stone specialist is evaluating this project to let us know what needs to be done to make sure all aspects of the exterior façade are secure. We hope to have this project evaluated and completed by spring 2009.

Be Safe!

The parking decks will soon be getting an enhanced camera security system. The new system will be web-based in that the storage of data will not be confined to a DVR or VHS system. The new system will allow for greater flexibility in functions, alarm notifications, and the potential tie-in for a future city-wide security monitored system. We are very excited with the possibilities in police enforcement of the parking areas as well in the Central Business District of downtown.

Gobblers for Parking??

The parking decks will also be installing new parking gate equipment and ticket "gobblers" in the next few months. The current gate equipment is outdated and the internal components are no longer supported, making spare parts difficult to find when needed. This will upgrade all the decks to the same version of equipment so that they are all equipped the same.

The ticket "gobblers" (ticket retrieval system) are something new that will be installed at the parking deck exits. This will allow the decks to keep the exit gates down for more accurate accountability of facility counts and use. The customer that takes a ticket at entry to enter the deck will also deposit the ticket in the "gobbler" at the point of exit and the gate will rise. This will better enable us to keep more accurate counts of our monthly and hourly users as well as after-hours data for reporting and management needs.

Welcome to New Employee Derek Scales

Parking would like to introduce to you our newest meter maintenance technician/parking attendant. **Derek Scales** began working with the Parking Section on October 1, 2008. He has been busy learning the ropes of the meter maintenance technicians and all that is involved with working on parking meters, meter money collection, maintenance of parking deck equipment, lighting, etc. He will also be cross-trained on the parking attendant responsibilities of running the cashier booth and handling new sign-ups, cancellations, and daily paperwork.



In case the name sounds familiar, he is also Kimberly Scales' (Field Operations – Warehouse) husband. Welcome to the team, Derek!

Parking Spotlights Kay Martin

Parking is highlighting **Kay Martin**, supervisor of the Church Street Parking Deck for the winter edition of the GDOT newsletter. Kay has been employed by the City of Greensboro in Parking since April 2003. She enjoys working for the City and she counts it a privilege to meet, share, and experience many new friends along the way. She has met people from all walks of life, including many diverse cultures from those visiting the library or Cultural Arts Center.

Prior to her employment with the city, she worked in retail management. She is very thankful that she does not have to work the long days and nights, especially around the holiday season. It has been a real treat for her to have the day after Thanksgiving off and Christmas as well. (If you're not in retail, you do tend to take this for granted!)



After hours and during her time off, Kay likes to stay active. In her spare time she does crafts and especially enjoys cross-stitching. She claims she is a "pack rat" and never throws anything away. Kay says she always felt there is nothing too old or too ugly that a little care, time and effort can't restore to something of beauty.

Thanks Kay for the great job you do!

Signals Section

The traffic signal section is winding up the heavy construction season and preparing for our winter needs. As of the first week of December we have completed 3,142 work orders. Recently we have completed construction of a new signal at Lanada & Stanley and completed the installation of metal mast arm poles at the intersection of Friendly & Holden. The signal system replacement project has begun in full this fall and the signal contractor, American Lighting and Signalization of NC, has set up their office in Greensboro. The contractor has begun making modifications to our existing cabinets and will soon begin installing over 120 miles of fiber optic cable to all our signal cabinets. We have completed our required utility adjustments and I would like to thank **Kevin Pulliam**, who led the effort to execute over 800 separate pole transfers and adjustments in order to bring our equipment into compliance with the National Electric Code.



In employee news, the traffic signal section has three new employees that all started in September. We would like to welcome **Tim Hulon**, hired on from the Signs & Markings section, **Greg King** and **Kevin Johnson**, both hired on from Engineering & Inspections.

Signs & Markings Section

What, more with less? Absolutely! How? Review the process. Know your costs and CHANGE to meet the demands. Although one may think “easier said than done,” this is exactly what is happening in GDOT in order to provide adequate core services. In Signs & Markings we were fortunate to apply and receive a grant through a program to upgrade existing sign face materials sponsored by 3M and the National Association of County Engineers. It fit right in with our goal to upgrade signage in the most recent annexations in the northwest and southeast areas of Greensboro. We are well into our sign update and expect to complete the project this fiscal year. The grant reduced our costs on this project by 35%.

Some more significant CHANGE to announce: **Tim Hulon** has accepted a position in the Traffic Signals Section. Although his knowledge and experience will be missed in Signs & Markings, we wish him the best in this endeavor. And besides, he’s just next door! So right now we’re making ends meet and staying positive.

Work keeps pouring in for Special Event and Work Zone Traffic Control as it has been for some years now. In the past months we have been evaluating and making needed CHANGE in order to be more efficient. **Mike Neese** and **James Jenkins** have accepted the challenge to streamline this service. We are seeing excellent results so far.

On the Markings side: centerline PM’s were completed, equipment has been added or enhanced and we have kept up with requests for service. However, the need for a general overall marking maintenance plan still exists. Oh, but CHANGE is approaching rapidly. The word is that our Marking Layer will be added into EAM soon. We are now in the planning stages of how to best use this resource to bring this service up to the levels we currently provide in Sign Fabrication, Sign Maintenance and Traffic Control.

Signs and Markings would like to thank all of our colleagues in GDOT for all you do to assist us with our work. We are proud to be on your team.

Signal System Replacement Project is Underway

Three bids were submitted for implementation of the signal system replacement project. The low bid was submitted by ALS of North Carolina in the amount of \$16,844,944.25. While this is a significant amount, it is actually 12.1% below the project estimate. ALS was officially awarded the contract on June 17, 2008.

During the preconstruction conference, the ALS project manager, Claude Zukowski, announced his intent to complete the project within three years. The company is hard at work right now, primarily installing the necessary wiring for new data collection detectors that will feed vital traffic information to the central computer.

The major work will commence in early 2009 when ALS begins to change signal control units at each intersection and starts installing the new fiber optic communications cable network. The contract calls for installation of new cabinets and controllers at 438 intersections. About 150 miles of fiber optic cable will be installed. Additionally, the project includes video cameras for traffic monitoring at 41 locations.

When completed, Greensboro will have a state-of-the-art signal system that will carry the city well into the future.

Design Review & Safety Section Update

Over the last year the TRC (Technical Review Committee) Management Team has been working closely with staff and the development community to help identify possible areas of improvement. On September 5, 2008 the TRC Management Team hosted a “Summer Sizzler” where members of the TRC and the management team openly discussed on-going issues and brainstormed possible solutions. A survey was sent out and a follow-up session is scheduled in the near future.

How does this fit in to GDOT’s on-going commitment to quality? The city’s goal has been to return 95% of the submitted plans back to the applicant within the allotted time. First time plan submittals are due within 10 working days and “high priority” plans within 5 working days. As of November 2008, the Design Review and Safety Section has reviewed approximately 400 plan submittals. That is an increase of 5% over last year and we still exceeded the goal by returning 96% of the plans within the allotted turn around time! In addition, the approval of the submitted plans required the Design Review and Safety Section to review and approve 110 driveway permits!

With the recommendations of the TRC Management Team and the on-going commitment to looking into alternative ways of improving our processes, we look forward to the challenges of the upcoming new year and hope to continue and to improve the service our customers have come to expect!



2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

Early 2009 will see the completion of the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP focuses on transportation needs from short to long range over the next 25 years, and recommends a range of multi-modal transportation improvements and policies for the Greensboro Urban Area. One important thing to know about the LRTP is that it involves a series of federal requirements, including that it be updated at least every four years. Also, all major projects must be included in the LRTP before they can proceed, and the LRTP must meet specific air quality tests in order to be approved.

A draft of the plan was complete by summer 2008 with adoption set for August 2008. However, this was delayed due to the completion of additional air quality work. Additional air quality work was required because the Triad MPOs, specifically Guilford County, were not meeting federal standards for one hour ozone. The Conformity Report documents the air quality analysis for the Triad MPOs which include Greensboro, High Point, Winston-Salem, and Burlington. The completion of the analysis required cooperation among the Triad MPOs, Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART), N.C. Division of Air Quality, N.C. Department of Transportation, and Forsyth County Environmental Affairs Department.

Both the 2035 LRTP and Air Quality Conformity Report were taken out for public review in October with a Public Information Meeting October 30, 2008. Public involvement is required by federal regulations including a 30 day review period for these documents. The documents were placed at several public sites including libraries, local and county government offices, and area colleges. The turnout for the public meeting was lower than the previous meeting held in the spring, but there was input in the way of written comments submitted by citizens and environmental agencies.

The final 2035 LRTP, along with the Conformity Report is expected to be approval by the Transportation Advisory Committee in January 2009. The final approval from the federal government is expected in February 2009, the effective date of the 2035 LRTP. See www.guampo.org for more information.



Bicycle Safety Month 2008

Bicycle Safety Month was celebrated throughout the month of September 2008. The goal of this event was to increase awareness of safely sharing the road among bicyclists and motorists. The Share the Road banner was seen during the month on ten Greensboro Transit Authority buses and four billboards.

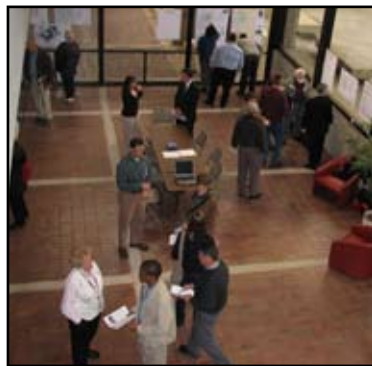
Bicycle Safety was the topic on WFMY's Good Morning Show on September 18th. These live television segments focused on sharing the road, safety equipment, bicycle safety checks and bikes on buses. **Peggy Holland**, **Peter Ohlms** and intern **Kyla Purtell** were interviewed for the segments. The Bike for a Day celebration to encourage bicycling as a transportation alternative was held at Friendly Center on September 20th. A number of organizations, including GTA, PART, PTCOG, Safe Kids Guilford, BIG, Cycles deOro and Clear Channel radio participated. Activities at this event included bike demonstrations, helmet give-a-ways, and bike rodeos. To further reach out to younger riders and their parents, the MPO distributed over 37,000 bicycle safety brochures to Guilford County School elementary and middle school children.

For more information on bicycle safety, please go to www.gsosharestheroad.org.

Battleground Rail Trail

Spring 2009 will at last see the start of construction on Phase I of the Battleground Rail Trail in which the underpass portion at Cone Boulevard will be the first part of the project to be constructed. Traffic flow will be maintained throughout construction, although some congestion is to be expected. The trail will connect the existing sidewalk just south of Edney Ridge Road on the west side of Battleground Avenue to an existing sidewalk behind the Target shopping center just north of Markland Drive. Construction on the trail will begin after the underpass

Continued on page 13



NCDOT Project News

Part of GDOT's responsibilities in staffing the Metropolitan Planning Organization is to closely coordinate with NCDOT on roadway project construction. This includes coordinating between NCDOT, the City, the County, and the towns, as well as providing detailed information regarding traffic forecasts, designs, and public involvement. For an up-to-date, readable report, please go to www.greensboro-nc.gov/gdot and click on Project Update Newsletter under "What's going on at GDOT?". Upcoming project highlights include:



High Point Road (U-2412B) from Vickery Chapel Road to Groometown and Hilltop Road

NCDOT is preparing final construction plans to begin right-of-way acquisition in February 2009. The project is currently scheduled to go to construction in August 2011. The project consists of the widening and new alignment in sections. The "B" section of the project begins with the eastern end of the Jamestown bypass. The project transitions to existing alignment east of Guilford College Road. The project begins a new alignment section around the old Jefferson-Pilot site at the Adams Farm Shopping Center and rejoins the existing alignment east of Roland Road. The project concludes east of the Groometown and Hilltop Road intersection. The cross section to be constructed is six-lanes divided with a curb and gutter where they are widening the existing roadway and paved shoulders with the new alignment.

Northern/Eastern Urban Loop (U-2525B/C) from US 70 to west of Lake Jeanette Road

NCDOT is preparing to conduct a public meeting in January 2009 to inform the public of the project's design. They are conducting this meeting due to the amount of time that has passed since the project's public hearing conducted in May 1995. The design is four-lane divided with interchanges at Huffine Mill Road and US 29. The interchange design at US 29 has an interim full build-out design. The full build-out will come when the "C" Section is constructed. The reconstruction of the US 29 and Hicone Road interchange is to occur with the "B" Section. The "B" Section is scheduled to begin right-of-way acquisition in the spring of 2009.

West Market Street (R-2611) from west of Bunker Hill Road to east of NC 68

NCDOT has begun acquiring right-of-way for this project; construction is scheduled to begin in November 2010. The project consists of widening the existing roadway to four-lane divided roadway with curb and gutter. NCDOT has received our comments on the design and has agreed to provide sidewalks where requested. NCDOT Division 7 has agreed to look into a possible Division-funded project to widen West Market Street to three-lanes beginning with this project and the future entrance of the FedEx Ground site in Kernersville.

Rail Trail continued from page 12

is under construction so both projects can be completed at approximately the same time and open together.

Numerous complications in design, acquisition, and regulatory reviews have kept the Trail in the planning, design, and right-of-way phases for many years. Finally, moving the project to construction is the culmination of a lot of hard work, especially for Project Manager I, Tom Cordell, and the real estate specialists of Engineering & Inspections. Once opened, the trail will connect to the Bicentennial Trail which begins at Pisgah Church Road just to the west of Battleground Avenue. Future phases of the trail depend on the abandonment of the existing rail line, at which time the trail will expand south where it will connect to the Southeast Walking Trail and the Downtown Greenway.

Upcoming Sidewalk Projects

2009 will be an exciting time for new sidewalk construction! Thanks to a federal grant through the Greensboro Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, Greensboro will have three contracts go forward this year with 30 projects totaling 15.5 miles of new sidewalk. Some of the more notable projects include:

Bessemer Ave. between US29 and Huffine Mill Rd. (13,945')
Cornwallis Dr. between Lawndale Ave. and Church St. (11,600')
Guilford College Rd. between Swing Rd. and Wendy Ct. (5,640')
Randleman Rd. between the interstate and Rocky Knoll Rd. (3,750')
Spring Garden St. between Holden Rd. and Lindell Rd. (4,900')
Vandalia Rd. between Randleman Rd. and Elm-Eugene St. (4,600')

Sidewalk will also be included as part of the upcoming New Garden Rd. widening project and the Hornaday Rd. extension.

Public Transportation

GTA and You - UNITED WE RIDE!

Public transportation in Greensboro is a lifeline for many people who otherwise would not have access to education, employment or any other of life's necessities. For others who take transit by choice, it provides the option of reducing congestion and pollution on our roadways and allowing a convenient commute to their intended destination. But for transit to operate most effectively, it involves give and take on behalf of the riders as well as the operating staff. This fall, GTA embarked on United We Ride, an opportunity for the riding community and GTA to work together for service excellence on the bus.

The campaign launched with a series of videos that target rider behaviors that can lead to an unpleasant transit experience for others.



This includes not having fares ready, loud cell phone use, eating on the bus and not dressing for the environment. The videos, airing on Greensboro Channel 13 and available on the GTA home page and YouTube site, offer a slightly comical, yet direct look at these behaviors and what riders can do to make the ride better. On the operations side, GTA has been working to step up its part in making every trip on GTA a memorable one, including availability of comment cards, establishment of rider information by text message and increased attention to maintenance of buses and bus stops. Working together, GTA and our passengers can make riding the bus an even more delightful experience for all.



Return of the Santa Train

It has become a yearly tradition for those who are good for goodness sake! The annual Santa Train visited the J. Douglas Galyon Depot Amtrak station on Saturday, December 13. Arriving direct from the North Pole by way of Raleigh, Santa and his entourage entered the concourse to the delight of children and parents who waited in line to greet him and share their Christmas wishes. The event had an even greater festive mood, being joined this year by the NC A&T Gospel Choir sharing their gift of song. GTA and GDOT once again partnered with NC-DOT Rail Division, providing hot apple cider with mulling spices and cookies for the visitors.

During the 1½ hour layover, guests were also able to visit the Depot interactive Welcome Center and take a trip upstairs to a special viewing of the Carolina Model Railroaders train layouts. Everyone in attendance was truly in a festive mood...well...mostly everyone! To see a video of the event including some outstanding vocals by the NC A&T Choir members, make sure to visit www.youtube.com/gtaheat



Want To Take A Bus Trip? Google It!

GTA is actively working on joining the family of transit systems offering trip planning on the web through Google Transit. Google Transit, created from Google Maps, allows commuters to plan their entire transit trip using an interactive web site. Visitors can simply enter their starting location and their destination. Google will calculate the walking distance to the closest bus stop, the time of the bus arrival, the route information, any necessary transfers, the total time of the trip and the cost. The directions are presented in an easy to use format that will make commuting by bus even more convenient. When completed, GTA will be the first transit system in North Carolina to partner with Google. The service is free to users and to GTA, but initially involves an extensive amount of labor in order to provide our transit data in the format needed by Google. We hope to take the site live in March 2009. In the meantime, if you want to get familiar with using Google Transit, you can visit <http://transit.google.com> and plan trips on any of the over 120 transit systems around the world. Happy traveling!



New Routes and Services

Public transportation services continue to grow in Greensboro to accommodate the citizens and visitors of our fair city. This fall, we launched new services for GTA and HEAT.

GTA began Route 15 Yanceyville Street/Brightwood School Road in September 2008. This new route serves North Greensboro by way of Church Street, Yanceyville Street and Summit Avenue. Implementation of this new route was intended to meet two outstanding needs...to provide new transit services in the Brightwood area of town and also alleviate crowding on Route 6. Both Route 6 and 15 serve Guilford County Social Services and the Cone Boulevard Wal-mart. Other locations accessible by 15 include Greensboro Sportsplex, Cove Creek Gardens and Aycock, Rankin and Brightwood school.



Also, HEAT kicked off a 3rd year of service with new route modifications. Route 72 City HEAT has been extended to serve the Fulton Avenue apartments off Lee Street. Additional requests have been received for HEAT service from other communities and all will be considered for future service along with outstanding GTA service requests.

SCAT News

Specialized Community Area Transportation (SCAT) services are now available at the click of a mouse. SCAT riders can now send transportation requests from their computer, but must be registered to participate. To register, contact Sherria High at 373-2166 to obtain your client ID number for use by the reservation system. Upon receiving the number, simply visit www.greensboro-nc.gov/gdot/scat to make your reservation.

SCAT has also recently begun the task of issuing photo identification for SCAT users. These new ID's will replace the traditional "green card" and will better allow SCAT operators to identify the bearers as well as give paratransit riders no-charge access to all GTA fixed routes. The monumental task of photographing all 900+ active riders has begun with about 10% of the riders completed. SCAT clients are visiting the GTA offices to have photos made, and GTA has gone on-site to group facilities to gain the images also. Riders have begun receiving their updated identification in mid-January featuring their photos and updated rider information. To make an appointment for your photo ID, SCAT riders can contact SCAT Customer Service at 373-2732.

CDOT Snapshot

Bikes and Buses...two great ways to get around town as shown here at the Bike for a Day event.



Mayor Yvonne Johnson is interviewed by BBC host Max Pearson during an election night live broadcast of The World Today at the J. Douglas Galyon Depot.



GTA Administration's Hilda Scales treats customers with a smile!



New GTA buses began arriving in January featuring a number of on-board cameras for rider safety.



Adam Fischer and Margie Chrismon announce achievement of the 2008 City-County Campaign Goal.



Guilford County school students listen to a reading on Rosa Parks Day



After a recent rainstorm, a beautiful rainbow arcs over an Elm Street intersection.